THE

AERONAUT.

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"Gentlemen;

"The following narration has nothing to recommend it to your notice but its melancholy & its simplicity. It is the unadorned memorial of a being whose feelings had been warped, whose mind had been perverted, whose faculties had been directed to a miserable & dangerous use.

"Occasion lately led me to a remote part of a neighboring state. I was on horseback, and forgetting myself in the contemplations the scenery around me called up, suffered my horse to take what direction he pleased. When I recovered my recollection, I found myself in a road with which I was totally unacquainted. I turned, but became only more perplexed. It was growing dark, and I began to apprehend that I should be obliged to remain in the woods all night. At length however I discovered a narrow pathway, which seemed to lead to some dwelling. I spurred my horse onward, and entered upon the road with hope but uncertainty. It soon emerged from the wood. It wound round the side of a hill, overgrown with those dark evergreens so prevalent in american scenery, and which give such a deep and

sombre hue to all around. The night was now very fast closing in. The dark shadows of the trees, as they were shaken by the wind, or partially illumina-
=ted by the ~~fa~~ dying radiance of day, threw themselves into all manner of fantastical shapes. I own that I felt an involuntary dread as I pursued the road, so totally ignorant as I was whither it might lead; and my fears were not altogether removed by the appearance of the hut which now burst upon my sight.

"Who are you?" said a voice, the tones of which were discordant beyond description. "What do you want at this time of day?" — I dismounted, and approaching the speaker, perceived in the twilight a small, decrepid figure of a man, seated near the door of the hut. I stated my adventure to him, & requested to be set right in my way.

"You've come a long & weary path
out o' your way—" rejoined the man,
"but," he continued, "ye're welcome
"to all the comfort this little hut
"can give you." I was about to
decline his offer. He waved his hand
authoritatively, and calling to the
interior of the cottage, a female made
her appearance. "Let the stranger,"
said he, "have refreshment, and
"sleep." She then requested me to
enter the house, where I was entertained far beyond my expectations,
and shewn to a neat room for
my repose; for I found that the
place was far better than its external appearance promised.

'I however got no sleep that
night. The tones of the host's voice
were so strange, quick, and unnatural, that they vibrated on my
nerves, and effectually precluded my
sleeping; although all was now
perfectly still and calm, except
the last warblings of the birds as

they sunk to repose, and the incessant chirpings of the insects in the surrounding woods.

"I had ~~got~~ fallen into a kind of disturbed doze, from which my disordered fancy continually awaked me with some wild and incoherent dream, when I was aroused by the half-touch'd notes of a harp, evidently in the grove below the window. It was a wild and unearthly prelude that I heard. The tones seemed as if they came from some wandering spirit of the air, so soft, so beautiful, so tender did they ~~sound~~ sound to me. I at length distinguished the following words, sung by a female voice to the instrument.

1

Talk not to me of earthly bliss—
My hours of joy are fled forever!
Talk not to me of happiness—
It shall this heart revisit—never!

2

The radiant visions of delight
I once had smiled so fondly over,
Are set in misery's hopeless night,
And I their beams may not recover.

Dark is this sad & lonely heart –
Dark as the sober hues of even;
When shall this spirit hence depart?
When shall it wing its flight to heaven?

"Away – away" – exclaimed the hoarse tones of the host; "away with those "notes that only harrow up my bosom. "Oh night – welcome wouldst thou be "if thou went tenfold darker!" and then there followed such a heart-drawn groan, that I shivered as it struck upon my ear. The music was heard no more all night; but that hollow voice continued its groans and its complaints at intervals till morning.

"I arose from my couch. ~~They were assembled~~ The inmates of the cottage I found already up. The host was without; and in the room where the simple breakfast was prepared, were seated an elderly woman, the same who had attended me the evening before, whose wrinkled brow & furrowed visage proclaimed

both age & sorrow; and a younger female, who had been once evidently beautiful in a high degree, but who appeared subdued by anguish, and worn by grief. Upon her large and languid eye hung a heaviness, which told that the heart was not at ease. Perceiving a harp in the room, I ventured to ask whether it were she who had sung in the night so sweetly. She appeared confused, and answered, that she supposed I was asleep, or she should not have disturbed me. I assured her of my gratification, and desired to see the host. There was a shade of redoubled gloom which past her brow at the mention of him; a tear started to her eye, and she pointed me to the door.

"I found him in his old situation. I had now an opportunity of gazing on his countenance. There was a mingled expression of misery and ferocity. The traces of beauty and of dignity still remained, mixed with darker features. His brow was knit, and his lips were moving. I saluted him, and he started from his reverie. I thanked him for his polite attention, & requested to know what was the amount of my debt. "You mistake," said he, "I "do not keep an inn. You are welcome to "all I can bestow." I apologised for my

mistake. "apologies," he answered, "are "unnecessary. I am used to mankind. I "am hardened to their follies — their mis-"takes, their —" his voice was lost in a wild scream. I gazed at him with alarm. "Why do you look at me thus?" he fiercely interrogated; — "am I hateful then even to a stranger? away — lest the basil-isk you gaze on sting you. But soft — hast thou a feeling heart? — Oh that there was a feeling heart on earth. But you shudder — ah! you weep! Then listen to my story. Follow me to my resting place." —

He arose from his seat. I now perceived that his legs had been broken in two or three places, & that he almost dragged his limbs after him. I shivered at the sight; but restraining my feelings, followed him into a small inclosure, where I saw two simple tombs. We seated ourselves on the turf.

"Here," said he, "repose," and he wiped a single tear from his eye; — two of my babes. Wouldst thou know all I can tell thee? Then listen. — "My name is ~~Waldemar born in England~~ Fitz-Herbert. I was born in England, heir to a large fortune, ~~[illegible]~~ and when I attained my growth, possessed a beauty of person

which attracted universal notice. Think me not vain. Vanity has past away long since in my heart. It gained the affections of a lovely girl, whom I married. Pardon my conciseness. I must be brief —

"A villain who had loved my Henrietta, wormed himself into my affections, and ruined my property. My numerous friends deserted me. I was left on the wide world with none but Henrietta to comfort me. I challenged the villain who had done all this. He fell in the combat."

Here he paused a moment; then dashing away the thick drops that stood on his brow, he proceeded.

"I fled for my life. My wife & a child, the only one we had, had accompanied me. We reached France, & pursued our way to Onupia. Without the means of supporting our existence any longer, we at last sat down in the stupid apathy of despair. I plundered the first passenger I met, was detected, broken on the wheel, and banished the country. You yet see my miserable condition.

"Lost now to fortune, fame, health, and happiness, we gained the sea coast, and sailed for America. I was a perpetual object of derision; but when Henrietta was present, her dignity repressed the insolent barbarity of the crew; and

when we reached this country, after an ineffectual struggle for support, we found out this miserable residence. I have found means to procure a little remnant of my property in England, and we have lived comparatively ~~happy~~ easy. My mother followed my fortunes, & sought out my abode. They endeavor to soothe my sorrows, & calm my soul. But no - it may not be.

"Our infants, for Henrietta bore me one soon after our arrival, have both perished. As for myself, I know not how long I have to groan on in this weary life. I have been taught to hate mankind. You may now think me calm: there are moments when I rage with fires stronger than the ~~[illegible]~~ fury of the volcano. You would have me love mankind! Ah! had you like me been stripped of all - had you been thrown a wretched outcast on the world - had been like me tutored in the school of sorrow till it withered every fibre & froze every tendril of ~~your~~ heart - had you suffered all this, would you have loved mankind?" -

I spoke of resignation to the will of heaven. "Heaven!" he exclaimed - "heaven has abandoned me! - Oh! I was made by nature for a great, a noble

part in the world; I was designed to pour blessing & pleasure wherever I appeared — see what man has made me! Can I love mankind for this? — Yes - yes - this heart is seared forever - these feelings are dried up - my energies are gone - my intellect is crazed - and who has done it? Man!

"Henrietta often takes up her harp, and sings some lay I once loved. - It only drives me to distraction. It only reminds me that I have taken her from comfort & happiness - that I am a curse and a bitterness to her existence - a blur on mankind, and a blot in nature! Young man - may you never know what it is to feel like me the harrowings of conscious injury - to mourn over wrongs which have ruined one, but which I cannot repair."—

My tears fell on his hand. He sprung from me. "Ah! a human tear! I have not felt it on my withered hand for a long, long time. But go - let my sorrows detain thee no longer - go, &c. in the vortex of dissipation, in the career of pleasure, in the bustle of business, - think on the cripple, the broken-hearted, the crazed Fitz-herbert, and shudder."—

"I arose – took leave of him, & then of the unhappy family; and having regained the direct road, pursued my journey, sighing over what I had seen & heard with heart-felt sorrow. If occasion should ever lead me thither again, a further account of this unfortunate family shall be at your service."

"I remain, &c

"W.F."

(E.)

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